Message Text

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BANGKOK PASS SONGKHLA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PBOR, TH, MY

SUBJECT: THAI MALAYSIAN BORDER MEETING

REF: BANGKOK 13766 (SONGKHLA 0125)

1. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING FROM LOCAL PRESS CONTACTS THAT THE RTG DID RAISE THE ISSUE OF THE MUSLIM SEPARATISTS AT THE RECENT PENANG REGIONAL BORDER COMMITTEE MEETING, BUT ONLY IN A LOW-KEY, PERHAPS PRO-FORMA, WAY. THE GOM ONCE AGAIN EXPLAINED ITS INTERNAL POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH MAKING A PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO SUPPRESSING THE SEPARATISTS, E.G. BY INCLUDING THE SEPARATISTS AS A LEGITIMATE TARGET OF THE BORDER AGREEMENT, AND THE RTG THEN LET THE MATTER DROP.

2. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE RTG AND THE GOM HAVE DECIDED TO PLAY DOWN THE SEPARATIST ISSUE IN THE INTEREST OF ACHIEVING SOME KIND OF EFFECTIVE COOPERATION AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS. THE EMPHASIS IN PENANG ON NEWLY DISCOVERED LINKS BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND IS EVIDENCE OF THIS. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE ISSUE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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UNWILLINGNESS OR INABILITY OF THE GOM TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT MALAYSIAN-BASED SUPPORT FOR THE SEPARATISTS DOES NOT CONTINUE TO BE AN IRRITANT IN THAI-MALAYSIAN RELATIONS AND THAT IT COULD NOT BE ESCALATED BY THE THAI AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE.

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